



# V-CAN CONNECTOR

Voluntary Community Assistance Network

Indiana Eligibility Modernization Project

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Coalition look forward to  
working with all V-CAN  
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*- Zach Main*

## Inside this Edition

Director's Update	1/2
V-CAN Profile	2
Regional Spotlight	3
Q&A Corner	3
Other FSSA Initiatives: Healthy Indiana Plan	4

## Director's Update Extensive Use of New Tools in Region 1!

by Zach Main, Director  
FSSA Division of Family  
Resources

We closed 2007 by improving public assistance services to Hoosiers! In the 12 counties located in the Region 1, there are more ways for applicants and clients to apply for and manage public assistance benefits. Applicants have started applications over the phone and on the Internet, and submitted completed applications by mail and FAX to the Document Center for processing. In addition, clients have reported changes and checked case status on the Internet and over the phone.

Thank you to all V-CAN members who have been part of the pilot implementation. We have heard from many V-CAN members with both successes and challenges with the new system. I am pleased that we have worked together to resolve issues that have arisen when using the new tools.

During the initial months of implementation in Region 1, there were 2,858 online applications submitted and over 143,000 calls to the Call Center to ask questions, start applications or report changes. Additionally, there were over 158,000 pieces of supporting documentation processed at the Service Center. We are encouraged by the extensive use of the new tools available and are working continuously to improve the experience for applicants, clients and V-CAN members.

As we reflect on the pilot, I would like to highlight a few of the enhancements made to the new system so far:

- Due to the volume of FAXed applications, required documents and phone calls to the Service Center,

additional phone lines and FAX servers were added.

- Additional servers were added to the Service Center to accommodate an increase in volume of online applications.
- The online application has been, and will continue to be, improved in response to feedback from clients and V-CAN members.
- In response to the need for information on more than one client at a time, an Authorized Representative (AR) can now receive details on up to three clients during one call with a Call Center Representative. Information on additional clients will be provided to the AR within the same day.

*Continued on page 2*

### Important Federal Earned Income Tax Credit Information

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has provided timely information on the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The EITC is a tax benefit available to many low-income working families; however, many eligible families are not aware of the benefit or how to apply.

Now is the time to inform our mutual clients on the benefits of the EITC. If you would like more information on the EITC, visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). There is also a "Money Talks! Have You Heard? Community Outreach Kit" available from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP). This tool provides information and a free outreach kit to help you publicize and educate your clients on the benefits of the EITC. You can request a free copy of the EITC outreach kit by emailing [eickit@cbpp.org](mailto:eickit@cbpp.org) or by calling 202-408-1080.



**V-CAN Registration***(Statewide, as of 1/25/08)***Access Points: 355***Publicized: 135**Non-Publicized: 220***Referral: 263****Informational: 394**

## Director's Update, continued

As we work toward improving service in the pilot region and implementing the new system for Regions 2, 3 and 4, the V-CAN is 1,012 members strong! We continue to grow the V-CAN as service providers and community organizations – like you – learn more about

the benefit of the new system to your clients. FSSA and the IBM-led Coalition look forward to working with all V-CAN members over the next several months to continue making eligibility modernization a success for Hoosiers!

## V-CAN Profile: **ECHO Housing Corporation/ Lucas Place Transitional Housing Program**

*This V-CAN Profile is the third in a series of profiles highlighting V-CAN members throughout Indiana.*

### **V-CAN Profile Fast Facts**

- ECHO Housing/Lucas Place was created in 1999 as a transitional housing facility for homeless families with children.
- Residents of Lucas Place participate in training and life skills classes to help transition into permanent housing.
- Lucas Place is a V-CAN Access Point.

**ECHO Housing Corporation** was created in 1991 by the Evansville Coalition for the Homeless (ECHO). ECHO Housing Corp. provides rental properties and a transitional housing facility for homeless families with children. The goal of ECHO Housing Corp. is to provide families with the training and skills needed to move into permanent housing.

**Lucas Place Transitional Housing Program** is operated by ECHO Housing Corporation. Lucas Place consists of 20 single-family, two, three and four bedroom apartments furnished with appliances and utilities. Lucas Place Transitional Housing Program is designed for homeless families with children who need more than just a roof over their heads. Lucas

Place provides life skills training and support services to help families transition into permanent housing. Residents are required to attend life skills classes on financial management and healthy relationships. Residents also attend weekly meetings with a case manager to develop a "goal plan" to become self-sufficient. Additionally, Lucas Place refers clients to over 30 social service agencies within the Evansville area along with providing job search assistance. "With these classes, direction, and goals we get clients ready for the transition into permanent housing," said Kelli Seddon-Burris, the ECHO Housing Program Director.

Since the creation of Lucas Place in 1999, approximately 158 families have benefited from the program. Roughly 82 percent of the families that have participated in the program for six months or more have moved into permanent housing.

Lucas Place is a V-CAN Access Point. Providing access for residents to manage their public assistance onsite is one more way that Lucas Place will help families become self-sufficient and transition into permanent housing. "Being a V-CAN member will be a tremendous help to the homeless community, especially those who apply for transitional housing," said Seddon-Burris. "Offering our current tenants and future clients access to the tools needed to start an application or report changes will reduce some of the stressors that accompany being homeless," she said.

*For more information on ECHO Housing Corporation and Lucas Place, contact Kelli Seddon-Burris at [kelli\\_burris@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kelli_burris@sbcglobal.net) or 812-423-8422.*

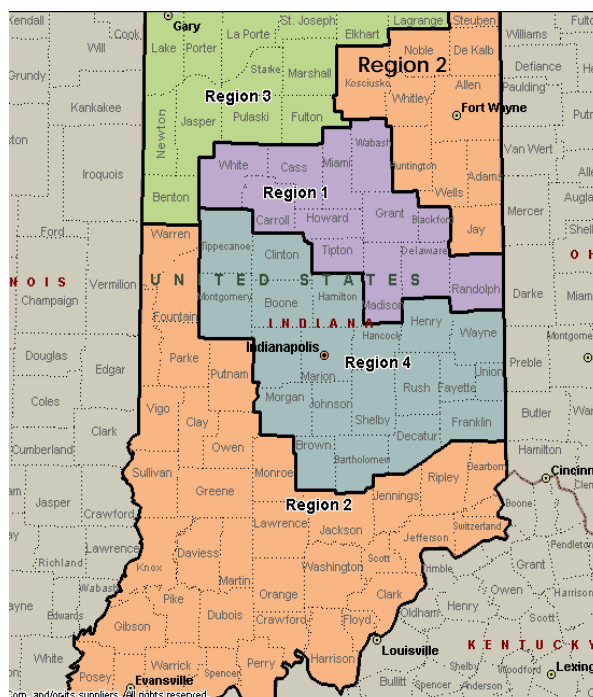
# Regional Spotlight: Region 2 Implementation Update

As 2008 begins, eligibility modernization in the pilot region continues to move forward. Applicants, clients and V-CAN members are using the Internet and Call Center to apply for and manage public assistance in Region 1. As a result of feedback received from clients and V-CAN members as well as observations by FSSA and the IBM-led Coalition, enhancements to the new system are being made to improve the new system while still in the pilot region.

FSSA and the IBM-led Coalition have pledged to implement a modernized eligibility system "right, not fast." Implementation of Region 2, previously targeted for late January, will occur when all of the planned improvements to the new system are in place. A new target date has not yet been established; however, we will keep our Region 2 V-CAN members informed in advance of implementation in their area.

Indiana's neediest Hoosiers deserve great service and FSSA and the IBM-led Coalition are making improvements to provide great service. Updates on the implementation of Region 2 will be provided to V-CAN members through email updates and the *V-CAN Connector*.

## Regional Implementation Map



## Q&A Corner



*Questions and answers about the V-CAN and eligibility modernization have been gathered from V-CAN Training sessions. This Q&A focuses on several commonly asked questions and answers. A complete list of V-CAN Q&A can be found at [www.in.gov/fssa](http://www.in.gov/fssa); click "Eligibility Modernization and Communications"*

### Q: How will Expedited Food Stamps work in the new system?

A: If an applicant is identified as potentially eligible for Expedited Food Stamps during the Internet Screening process, they will be instructed to go to a local DFR office. If an applicant is determined eligible for Expedited Food Stamps, the Electronic Benefits Card (EBT) will be authorized by the local DFR office.

### Q: When can applicants check their case status online?

A: A case number is assigned when the application and signature page are received by the Document Center. Once applicants receive the Pending Verifications notice (FI 2032), which lists their case number, they can check application status online using their last name, date of birth, case number and last four

digits of Social Security Number.

### Q: How will an applicant indicate a miscarriage on the online application?

A: There is not a place on the online application to indicate a miscarriage; however, applicants can make that information available during the interview process.

### Q: Will an interview be required for a TANF or Medicaid application? If so, when and how?

A: Interviews are required for TANF and Medicaid; however, they will be conducted over the phone in most cases. In-person interviews may be conducted at the applicant's request or due to individual circumstances such as personal needs or program complexity. An interview may not be required for a Hoosier

Healthwise (HHW) or Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP) application taken at a HHW Enrollment Center.

### Q: Who has access to client information?

A: While serving a client in the office or on the phone, the client can provide verbal authorization to a Call Center Representative for a V-CAN member to receive the information. If a client is not in your office or on the phone and you need case specific information, you must be listed as an Authorized Representative. Authorized Representatives can be designated in the Authorized Representative section of the application or by completing the Authorized Representative form that will be available soon. Watch for an email with more details on the Authorized Representative form.

## Other FSSA Initiatives: Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP)



*The Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP) is a new state sponsored affordable health insurance program for uninsured adult Hoosiers. Below is an update on HIP statewide implementation.*

### **HIP Begins Statewide**

The Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP) is now available to provide insurance coverage to eligible Hoosiers! The program officially began January 1, 2008. A big thank you to all V-CAN members that have contributed to the successful launch of the program by offering applications and/or assistance to your clients. To date, almost 19,000 applications have been submitted.

To illustrate the positive impact that this program is having, the following story was shared with us by the Community Hospital of

Anderson, a V-CAN Access Point that organized a HIP enrollment day in December:

*"We saw over 200 people Monday and accepted about 135 applications in the 7 hours we were open. The thing we heard over and over was "thank you." People who had been without insurance were so grateful for the opportunity to apply for insurance, some were literally in tears. So thank you for your help and the work you do. This was a very humbling experience for all of us that participated."*

### **Next Steps for HIP**

Work is already in progress to develop the HIP online application, which will allow individuals to apply directly over the Internet.

Also in development is a POWER Account Calculator that will be available at [www.HIP.in.gov](http://www.HIP.in.gov). This will allow an individual to estimate their POWER Account contribution. Stay tuned to the V-CAN Connector for future HIP articles in which we will keep

you posted on the progress of the HIP online application and program updates.

### **HIP Tips**

**Tip 1:** Need a refresher of the HIP training given in October 2007? Visit [www.HIP.in.gov](http://www.HIP.in.gov) and click the "Training" link under "About HIP" to watch a video recording of the "HIP General Training" and "Application Assistance Training" presentations.

**Tip 2:** Individuals can use the screening tool on the FSSA website (visit [www.in.gov/fssa](http://www.in.gov/fssa) and click the "Apply for Benefits" button) to determine if they are potentially eligible for HIP. However, the information entered into the screening will not be transferred to the actual HIP application until the online application is available.

**Tip 3:** To order a supply of HIP applications and brochures, access the link to the order form on our website.

Visit [www.in.gov/fssa](http://www.in.gov/fssa), click on "Eligibility Modernization," and then click "Communications." Choose the "HIP Application and Brochure Order Form" link and print the form. Mail or fax your order to the Indiana Commission on Public Records address on the form.

**Tip 4:** When referring others or contacting the HIP telephone helpline, please remember to include the "1" in the toll-free number, 1-877-GET-HIP9.

*If you would like more information or have questions about HIP, contact 1-877-GET-HIP9 or visit [www.HIP.in.gov](http://www.HIP.in.gov).*

## How Can You Get More Information?

If you have questions about Eligibility Modernization or the V-CAN, there are several ways you can get more information:

- Attend V-CAN Training prior to implementation in your Region;
- Visit [www.in.gov/fssa](http://www.in.gov/fssa) and

click "Eligibility Modernization/ Communications" to review presentations, common questions and answers and other helpful information about the V-CAN and Eligibility Modernization; or

- Email your questions to [vcan@us.ibm.com](mailto:vcan@us.ibm.com).



The next issue of the V-CAN Connector will be published in April 2008. Look for this issue in your Inbox and at [www.in.gov/fssa](http://www.in.gov/fssa). This issue will contain information on V-CAN Training and an update on regional implementation.